

Utilization of Cultural Resources by the Hmong and Dao peoples at Sapa market, in Sapa, Lao Cai province, Vietnam

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Abstract

This paper focuses on Sapa Market, a highland market located in the town of Sapa in Lao Cai Province, Vietnam. In earlier days, the market was a typical highland market with many unique characteristics; however, it has changed to a certain extent because of the influence of modernization and tourism. In fact, Sapa Market has been influenced substantially by ongoing tourism; consequently, I examine Sapa Market according to ethnic tourism development. The main content concerns four key groups of stakeholders: the government, ethnic minorities, non-ethnic entrepreneurs, and tourists who participate in the utilization of ethnic cultural resources at Sapa Market. Each of the four groups has different goals, methods, and status levels that influence utilization activities.

Keyword

cultural resource, market, ethnic tourism

ベトナム、ラオカイ省サパ市場におけるモン族と ザオ族の文化資源の利活用

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要旨

本稿はベトナム、ラオカイ省サパ町に位置する、サパ市場という高地の市場について論じるものである。かつてサパ市場は典型的な高地の市場として多くのユニークな特徴を持っていたが、いまや現代化の影響を受けて様々な変貌を遂げている。サパ市場は現在、観光の強い影響を経験している。本稿ではこの市場について、エスニック・ツーリズムとの関係という視点から検討する。その内容は、鍵となる4つのステークホルダーすなわち政府、少数民族、少数民族ではない業者、そして観光客に注目するものである。いずれのグループもサパ市場において少数民族の文化資源を利用しているが、グループの目的、方法、地位がそれぞれ異なっており、その影響は文化資源の利活用にも及んでいる。

キーワード

市場、文化資源、モン族、ザオ族

1. Introduction

Approximately two centuries ago, in Sapa district, Lao Cai province, Vietnam, one small market appeared and developed until now. Because of its long-standing traditional and cultural values, Sapa market has been set as one of the indispensable components of Sapa residents' life. From my point of view, it is the context, which reflects almost all features of Sapa cultural identity. In the contemporary period, under the influence of modernization and tourism, Sapa market has witnessed changes in many aspects. Some traditional cultural characteristics gradually vanished while new ones have unexpectedly emerged. However, it can never be a complete visit to Sapa without going to Sapa market, participating in Sapa love market. Scholars can look at the market from different angles. For example, in terms of economic aspect, the market is the place where trading activities take place; people do marketing and earning profits. We can also study the market in terms of social studies because the market is a mini society with complicated relationships and so on. For this paper, the author wants to take the cultural anthropological approach to understand the market in a narrower aspect: the situation of utilization of cultural resources of two ethnic groups: Hmong and Dao people at Sapa market.

2. Conceptual Framework

At first, theoretical issues related to the term "cultural resource" will be mentioned as a background theory. Initially, the term 'cultural resource' was used by American anthropological archaeologists in the early 1970s. Therefore, the term 'cultural resource'

originally belonged to archaeology disciplinary and was usually restricted to historic buildings and archaeological sites. Since the mid-1970s, the definition of cultural resources has become a little broader, resulting in the broadening of 'cultural resource' itself. The term has been adopted by a wide range of disciplinary interests, all of which focus on considerations about the protection of the cultural aspects. (Knudson 1986)

Consequently, cultural resource involved the things and behavior patterns that played an important role in reflecting human being's traditional culture, the "complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, act, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired (by a human) as a member of society" at that time. Cultural resources started to cover not only archaeological physical features such as sites, artifacts or buildings but also historical records, architectures, cultural landscapes, and even cultural 'intangible' values like religious beliefs (Knudson 1986: 400-401). As a result, 'cultural resource' became a broad academic term, which encompasses many narrow subtopics; as King said, "It's a mixed-up field" (King 2002: 1).

From the beginning up to now, 'cultural resource' attracted the interests of scholars from many fields, so large number of research works were conducted on those subtopics. They all offered reasonable ideas to some extent, and tried to explain the concept of 'cultural resource' in their own way. In general, the definition of 'cultural resource' can be understood as follows: 'Cultural resources encompass cultural elements or values, both natural and manmade, and associate with human activities. They must be utilized for different purposes apart from original purpose under socio-historical circumstances. Cultural

resources can be both tangible such as archaeological and historic properties, cultural landscapes, religious sites, and so on; and intangible such as traditional lifestyles, religious practices, or languages and so on. These resources are unique and cannot be renewable'. Cultural resource plays the role as the key term in this paper, which helps to shed the light on the ethnic cultural resources at the context of Sapa market.

In addition, Sapa market is a well-known tourism attraction of Sapa nowadays, therefore, the research on the market cannot avoid the influence of tourism, especially the ethnic tourism development. As a result, I decided

to apply the conceptual framework of 'ethnic tourism' in my research. (Figure 1)

Li and Wall (2009) suggested that: "Key stakeholders in the development of ethnic tourism: four key groups of stakeholders have been identified as units of analysis: (1) governments at various levels; (2) tourism entrepreneurs; (3) ethnic peoples; and (4) tourists. Their perspectives on ethnic tourism and their assessments of ethnic cultural representation and authenticity are compared. Each of the four stakeholder groups has different motives, goals, and objectives. Many stakeholders are not members of ethnic minorities. The stakeholders are presented in a similar form in the diagram but, in reality, they have different status and power that can change over time. They are not the only stakeholders but they are important ones". (Li and Wall 2009: 561)

Based on the conceptual framework of Li and Wall (2009), I came up with a new framework of four key groups of stakeholders involving cultural resource utilization at Sapa market as follows: (Figure 2)

The above diagram depicts the whole

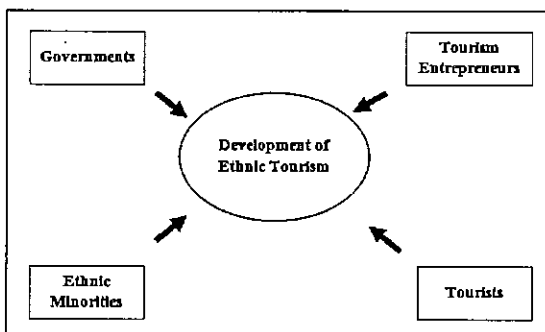


Figure 1: A conceptual framework: planning for ethnic tourism (Li and Wall 2009:562)

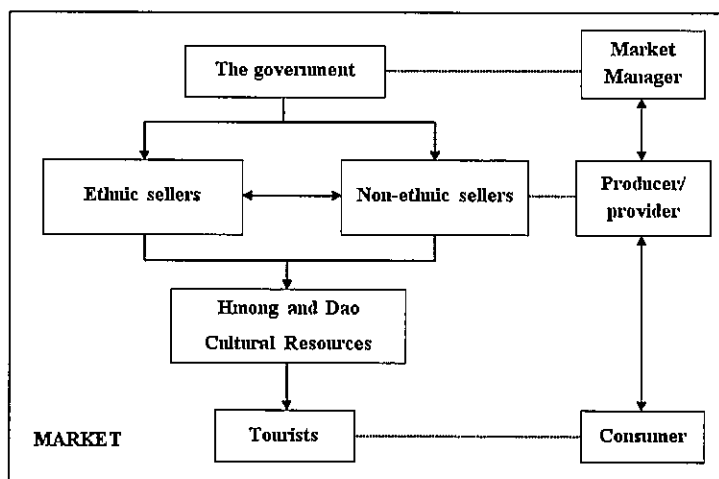


Figure 2: four key groups of stakeholders

structure of this research. I consider the market as a context where I set key groups of stakeholders: the government, ethnic entrepreneurs, non-ethnic entrepreneurs, and tourists. All four groups participate in the utilization process of Hmong and Dao cultural resources in the context of Sapa market.

3. Brief description of Sapa market

Initially, Sapa market was established by local Hmong people in Sapa and opened due to Hmong calendar. After that, the situation changed because of the intervention of French at the end of 19th century. French eliminated the old Hmong market and opened a new wooden market in the center of Sapa town. In 1995, the wooden market built by the French was replaced with a concrete market building.

At that time, the market was divided into four zones (A, B, C, and D) and two floors. At the end of 2014, Sapa People's Committee promulgated the decision that stopped all business activities at the old Sapa market built and used from 1995. The local government managed to move all small entrepreneurs to the new market, which was located one kilometer far from the old market. (Figure 3) (Figure 4)

4. The four main stakeholders at the Sapa market

– Local government

Among four groups of stakeholders, local authorities are the highest level of management. They not only cover all administrative and economic activities at the market, but also manage cultural ones. Remarkably, local

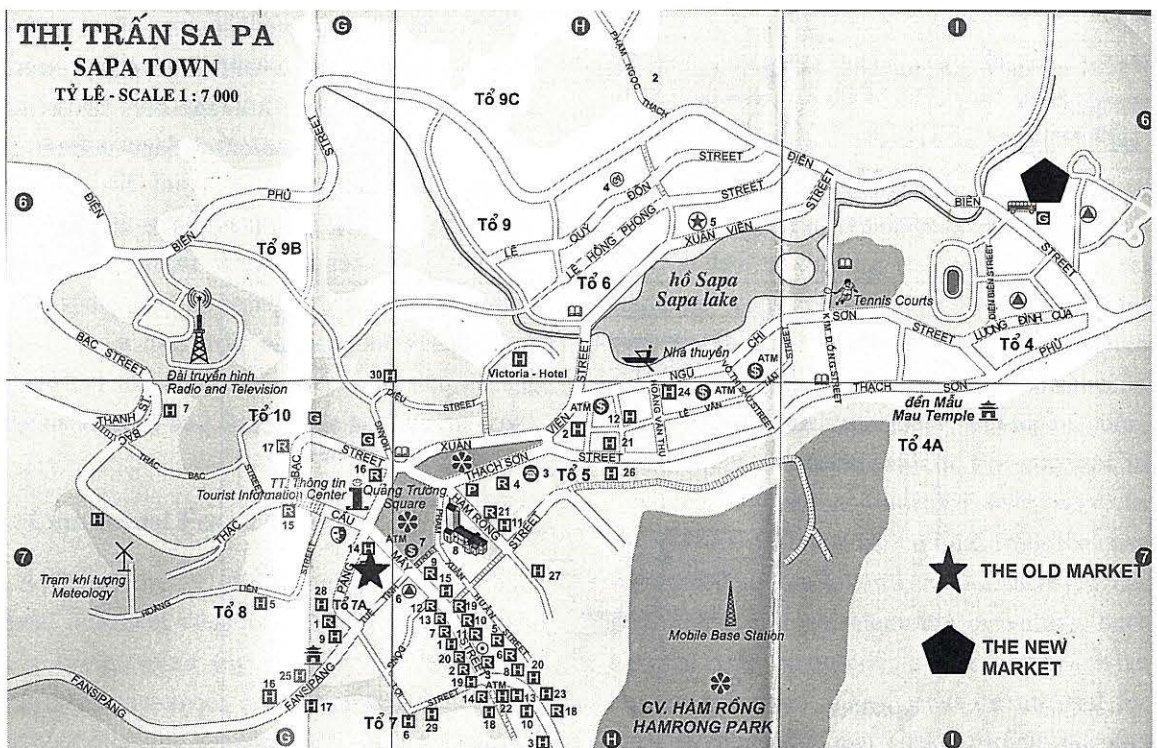


Figure 3: Sapa town map¹

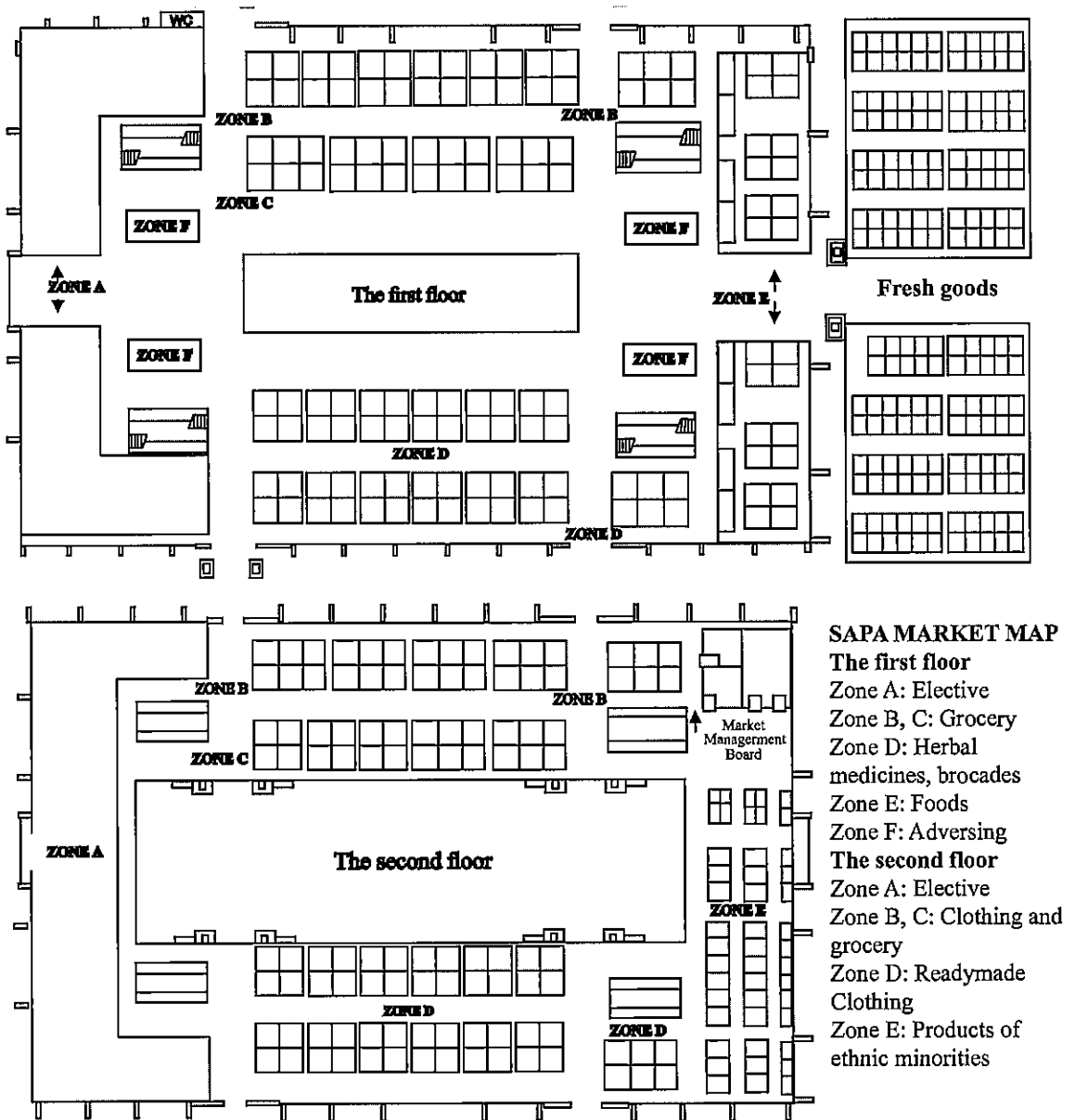


Figure 4: Sapa market map

government always acknowledges the touristic potential of ethnic cultural sources and advocates a combination of the ethnic culture conservation in parallel with the utilization of ethnic cultural elements as the 'resources' for tourism growth. The clearest example for this orientation is the policy 'Reconstituting 'Love

market' of Hmong and Red Dao people' of Sapa local authorities.

'Sapa love market' is an old cultural phenomenon closely related to the market of Hmong and Dao people in Sapa. In former days, the market was held on every Sunday. Because the distances between the villages and the

market were quite far and the market was only opened one time per week, ethnic people had to reach the market in advance on Saturday afternoon. Normally, they stayed overnight in the town center in order to wait for the market starting from Sunday morning.

The weather was very cold in Sapa at night; consequently, they had to gather around fires for warming. It was, however, still so cold that they could not get any sleep and often spent a sleepless night. The night was long; thus, young girls and boys usually did something to kill time. They found the opportunities to make friends and have conversations. Boys were playing musical instruments while girls were singing and dancing around the fire.

The nights became more vibrant owing to these activities. When the market began, they temporarily separated and made an appointment for the next market day. Thanks to these 'love market days', there were young girls and boys becoming the couples, and even becoming the husbands and wives. The name "Sapa love market" was born and gradually became a legend in the thought of tourists (Kim Oanh 1997). 'Sapa love market' was so famous that it attracted more and more tourists coming to Sapa in order to visit the market and experience 'love market'.

Unfortunately, 'Love market' today does not exist in reality anymore because of the influence of modernization and tourism. Sapa ethnic people, the owner of 'Love market', themselves are not deeply interested in maintaining this cultural phenomenon. The majority of tourists visiting Sapa still desire to experience 'love market', even though it did disappear. Facing this situation, local authorities launched a policy that reconstituted 'Love market night' in order to exploit touristic potential of this

cultural phenomenon. To carry out this policy, local government took responsibility for writing script and designing program for the show 'Love market night'. They selected ethnic artisans from music teams of nearby communes and then paid a salary to them. All artisans went to perform for the show 'Love market night' taking place in the town center every Saturday night.

In the past, 'love market' was a cultural phenomenon that only belonged to local ethnic people who practiced it for themselves, and was not the show for the visitors. However, the situation had changed when the number of visitors increased instead of that of local people, 'love market' now is purely a music show, which the district government designed to satisfy tourists' demands.

In addition, the artisans participating in this event are all quite young and some of them even do not have idea about 'love market'. Though some others heard about 'love market' from their parents or grandparents, they cannot catch the true meaning of 'love market'. From their point of views, 'love market' belongs to previous generations and it is not necessary for them to conduct this kind of cultural practice. They are joining 'love market' now as musicians hired by local government to perform a show for tourists.

To be honest, this policy plays an effective role in propagating and developing tourism. On weekend nights, the center of Sapa town has become much more exciting thanks to the show 'Love market night'. Tourists feel highly immersed into songs and dances performed by ethnic artisans. Nevertheless, 'love market' seems to be quite different from what they imagined before because it is not authentic.

Furthermore, it was the project of moving the

market away from the town center in 2014 that made the new Sapa market and the cultural phenomenon 'love market' become separate. As a result, although 'love market' originally was a part of Sapa market, now it has gradually become a specific cultural phenomenon that is not related at all to the market.

- Ethnic sellers

At Sapa market, there are two groups of ethnic sellers: permanent and impermanent sellers. For this paper, I will concentrate on the group of permanent ethnic sellers since they directly and stably participate in the utilization of ethnic cultural resource at market.

There are only 68 ethnic permanent sellers (Hmong and Dao people) at Sapa market now. This is a modest number in the total nearly 500 sellers of the market. All of them used to do business at Sapa old market. When the market was decided to be moved, together with many other old non-ethnic sellers, they were distributed a kiosk or a stall at the new market without doing new registration or joining bidding. In addition, thanks to the priority policy of the district government, they even did not have to pay rent for months. When I met them in October 2015, more than 10 months after moving to the new market, ethnic sellers were still using their stalls free of charge. The official of the Market Management Board said that they would consider ethnic sellers' business activities, and then set the fare level based on their income. However, the tentative fare is around 20 US dollars per month.

Although ethnic sellers only account for the minority among the sellers at Sapa market, we can easily recognize them since they all wear traditional costumes of their own group. The main colors of Hmong sellers' costumes are black and green while Dao sellers often wear

black and red costumes. Both Hmong and Dao sellers are not town dwellers. They lived at villages that are about 8 kilometers (Ta Van village of Hmong people) and 16 kilometers (Ta Phin village of Dao people) far from the market. The ethnic people often sell their products at Sapa market on the weekends or big holidays when the number of tourists visiting Sapa reaches the highest. On the normal days, they mainly stay at their villages to do houseworks, take care of children and cultivate rice.

Noticeably, doing business at the market is not the main source of income of ethnic sellers. When I asked ethnic sellers about the purpose of doing business at Sapa market, I found one common point very interesting among their answers: "Money from selling at the market is used to buy fertilizer". As we can see, agriculture still plays the crucial role in economic life of ethnic sellers and doing business at the market is only a supplementary activity that brings about their additional incomes to support agricultural work.

At Sapa market, ethnic sellers utilize their cultural resources by means of producing and selling traditional handicrafts. The most popular good is brocade costumes. In terms of brocade products, almost all the steps are manual jobs and sewing machine is the only tool that supports them during the production process. This trait makes brocade goods at stalls of ethnic sellers become well purchased since tourists believe that ethnic sellers' goods are authentic. In ethnic people's stalls, tourists can buy and try to wear full set of Hmong or Dao clothes, which include many parts: skirt, scarf, belt, hat, and decorative strings. Some popular utensils are also displayed on their stalls such as pillow covers, tablecloths, and so on. Especially, tourists seem to be the most fascinated in small

souvenirs such as key rings, cell phone bags, handbags, and colorful brocade jewelries such as necklaces and bracelets.

As a whole, the product models of Hmong and Dao people have not changed considerably from time to time because the majority of them are traditional costumes, which have a long history. However, under the influence of modernization and tourism, any big or small changes cannot be avoidable. The changes has appeared not only in product models but also in ethnic sellers themselves. At present, apart from handmade products, ethnic sellers also do business on several readymade goods such as purses, cuddly toys, or cell phone bags, which they buy from private production workshops. They can even produce wares embroidered with English words such as 'Sapa', 'welcome to Sapa' on. Obviously, these wares are not cultural elements of Hmong or Dao people, even though they were decorated with patterns that are quite similar to those on Hmong and Dao clothes.

Ethnic sellers, especially those who sold at Sapa market over 20 years ago, could not have a fluent conversation in Vietnamese at first, but now they can even speak to international tourists in English. I used to hear a conversation totally in English between an old Dao seller with a French couple. When the couple crossed by and the wife seemed to be curious about a scarf, the seller immediately introduced about the name, function, and the process of weaving the scarf in very detail. The seller persuaded so well that the couple could not leave before paying 8 US dollars for that scarf.

In addition, ethnic sellers are naturally famous for their honesty in business. They have never overcharged their customers. However, some old Hmong sellers admitted that they

did charge customers in high prices, but this did not happen frequently. Especially, they use different price levels for domestic tourists and international tourists. They believed that international tourists are rich; therefore, they often raise their prices when they meet international tourists.

In general, the method of utilizing cultural resource of Hmong and Dao sellers at Sapa market shows many positive effects, although it is quite simple and slowly improved.

- Non-ethnic sellers

At Sapa market, the group of non-ethnic sellers plays an important role in utilizing the ethnic cultural resources. They account for the majority of sellers at Sapa market. Differing from ethnic sellers who often go to the market on the weekends only and consider business as their part time jobs, non-ethnic sellers mainly survive thank to doing business at Sapa market. As a result, they go to the market all days of the week. In order to access the market frequently and easily, they normally live in surrounding areas that are not far from Sapa town. In order to have a place at the market, non-ethnic sellers have to pay a rent up to over 3500 US dollars for five years to the Sapa Market Management Board.

They do business on various kinds of products, which are necessary for local people including dry goods, grocery, brocade, herbal medicines, and readymade clothes, frozen goods, votive, rice, noodle soups, and so on. These non-ethnic sellers are clear-headed entrepreneurs who clearly acknowledge the high interest of customers in ethnic cultural elements at Sapa market. As a result, they have come up with many intelligent strategies, which have effectively utilized Hmong and Dao cultural resources to earn money.

Non-ethnic sellers normally sell various kinds of souvenirs. In non-ethnic sellers' shops, clothes including ready-made and brocade ones are the most popular among all kinds of wares, which sellers often display at eye-catching places. In addition, they do business on many jewelries such as bracelets, necklaces, and rings, etc along with toys for children, torches, musical instruments, or agricultural equipments. In contrast to ethnic people who themselves are able to produce wares for sale, non-ethnic sellers do not have ability to produce any kinds of their wares but mainly import goods from local production facilities.

In non-ethnic sellers' shops, traditional handicrafts of Hmong and Dao groups occupy a significant position. Brocade clothes are still well purchased commodities. Mrs. Hanh (57 years old) who is a Kinh seller doing business at Sapa market for 18 years said she imported brocade wares from local brocade production clubs in Sapa district. All wares are made by handicraftswomen who come from Hmong and Dao groups. Like brocades, other traditional hand-made products of Hmong and Dao people also appear in the shops of non-ethnic people. I saw many shops selling silverwares such as silver earrings or silver coins of Hmong people; musical instruments like panpipe of Hmong boys or drum made of buffalo skin of Red Dao people; and so on. For these products, non-ethnic sellers have to come to the villages of Hmong and Dao people to purchase from ethnic handicraftsmen.

In comparison with stalls of ethnic people which are a little bit simple with only clothes or silverwares, Kinh sellers offer their customers more choices with various goods. Especially, for a highland market like Sapa market, tourists visit there with the purpose of experiencing the culture of the ethnic majorities. Therefore,

positioning ethnic cultural elements as nuclear products and combining with various different products is obviously an intelligent strategy of non-ethnic entrepreneurs. The diversity in product types is the most different feature between ethnic and non-ethnicsellers.

Another strategy of Kinh sellers to be concerned is that they have created new products based on cultural values of Hmong and Dao groups. I am talking about modern daily utensils, which are embroidered decorative patterns resembling Hmong and Dao traditional costumes. At first glance, many people wrongly think that such products with brocade designs in Kinh people's shops as cuddly toys, purses, handbags, key rings, or blankets are traditional products of ethnic people.

Kinh sellers are also sharp advertisers with many intelligent ways. Some Kinh sellers normally wear ethnic clothes even though they are Kinh people, which make them different and prominent among other sellers. Some others take opportunities to attract children of groups of tourists with toys such as remote control helicopter or car. These toys stimulate the curiosity of children. Children often entreat their parents to buy those toys for them. In addition, a female souvenir shopkeeper attaches a flickering signboard with her funny nickname 'Chi Nam' (Mrs. Mushroom) on her kiosk.

Owing to all intelligent strategies above, it is easy to understand why non-ethnic sellers' shops always have a great number of customers.

– *Tourists*

The last stakeholder is tourists who are the common subject of all three other stakeholders. They do participate in the utilization of cultural resources of Hmong and Dao people but in a different way. In the context of the market, the government, ethnic sellers, non-ethnic sellers

all play the roles of producers or providers who mobilize and transform ethnic cultural elements into goods and services, and then distribute them to the tourists while tourists are consumers who receive and experience those cultural resources, subsequently, tourists have counter influence on those stakeholders.

Nowadays, every tourists visiting Sapa always take time to come to the market because it can never be a complete visit to Sapa without going to Sapa market. They love to buy handicraft products of ethnic people, especially brocade products. I used to meet some young girls who bought and wore full set of Hmong dresses because they wanted to 'be a Hmong girl one time'. Another tourist bought musical instruments or production tools of Hmong or Dao group from inclination.

For 'Sapa love market', the common impression of tourists after participating 'love market' is the feeling of disappointment since it cannot meet their expectations. In their imagination, 'love market' must be much more wild and romantic. As a result, they cannot satisfy with the 'love market' as a 'show', no more no less.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Remarkably, the market was not related to the cultural resources utilization from the beginning. When Hmong people initially established the market, it was a cultural phenomenon practiced by local ethnic people only. However, along with the socioeconomic development, the new groups of people such as the government, lowlanders, and especially tourists appeared and participated in the market activities. As a result, the market has gradually changed in order to adapt to the new situation that was strongly influenced by tourism. The

market no longer belongs to its founders who are native ethnic people. It is now a trading place for Sapa people. Particularly, it has become a 'node' or the context for the meeting of at least four different groups of people. They have mutual interactions through the cultural resources utilization with different purposes.

At the market, the government is unique among four groups since it does not participate directly in the utilization. It just indirectly participates through the system of policies. The government remains on the most noteworthy position and has effects on the other groups. Recognizably, it seems to be a *one-way* top-down direction while the opposite bottom-up interaction is quite weak. The project of moving Sapa market to a different place in 2014 is a noticeable case. When the government dispatched the project of market moving, they experienced strong opposition, particularly from sellers. The sellers would not like to be far from the town center where they had more opportunities to develop their business.

Obviously, local government had their own intention. Historically, Sapa market was built more than 20 years ago (in 1994), and as time went by, the market gradually became deteriorated. In addition, the space of the old market now turned out to be too small, which could not meet the trading demand of sellers, town dwellers, and tourists. As a result, regardless of protest wave, the project of moving Sapa market was conducted as the initial plan in December 2014.

At present, the new market has been opened for over one year; however, some problems which the government cannot control has arisen. The biggest one is the location of the market, for it is far away from the town center. As a result, the number of people visiting the

market, especially the group of impermanent ethnic sellers, has dramatically decreased.

Another fundamental consequence is the complaints about income decrease of sellers at the new market. All my informants, both ethnic and non-ethnic sellers, have suffered from moving the market that has made their trade depressed. The government is aware of this problem; nevertheless, they have been quite self-confident that the situation will be improved with the positive evolution trend in the future.

I briefly set the issue of market moving as well as its consequences aside and go deeper into the interaction among stakeholders. Local authorities direct the business of ethnic sellers at Sapa market via the system of policy. On the other hand, ethnic sellers remain quite passive in 'one-way direction' relationship with local government. The regular circumstance follows a pattern: the government releases the policy, and then ethnic sellers comply with it. With the purpose of stable development, the government, in fact, has promulgated many policies to encourage ethnic people's business at the market. For example, the government offered ethnic sellers a separate place at the main market with much cheaper rent or allowed impermanent ethnic sellers to use empty spaces of the new market and surrounding areas without paying rent. Nevertheless, the policy cannot fulfill their demand since the government themselves is influenced by various socioeconomic factors.

Non-ethnic sellers also suffered the 'one-way direction' influence from the government just as ethnic sellers. In any case, local government created and declared the regulation of Sapa market. However, non-ethnic sellers take initiative in business to some extent because they have firm knowledge and financial basis. As a result,

they can manage to adapt to the change originated from the government's policies. For instance, local government invested a huge amount of money in building the new market; therefore, in order to recapture capital, they set quite high renting fee for permanent sellers. Obviously, ethnic sellers cannot afford this amount of rent while non-ethnic sellers can. As a result, non-ethnic sellers have chances to occupy the most profitable spots for business at the market.

Surprisingly, there has been no relationship between two groups of sellers since both ethnic sellers and non-ethnic sellers have no need to be familiar with one another. However, as time passes by, two groups of sellers somehow have affected on each other to some extent. On one hand, Hmong and Dao sellers have imitated business strategies of Kinh people. They purchased new items originated from the innovative ideas of Kinh sellers and run business on more various sorts of items just as Kinh people do. They even have started to learn some tricks of Kinh sellers such as having bargain with customers or sometimes charging higher prices for goods. On the other hand, Kinh sellers have obtained cultural features of Hmong and Dao people to earn their living. They run business on ethnic products and wear ethnic brocade clothes to attract customers. In addition, they admit the role of ethnic sellers as one of the main attraction of Sapa market since many tourists visiting the market expressed the expectation of interacting with ethnic people.

Notably, during the utilization of cultural resources of Hmong and Dao people in the context of the market, ethnic sellers remain in a disadvantageous position to compete with Kinh sellers who have a better financial basis and educational background. As a result, although

Hmong and Dao sellers are the cultural subject who created cultural elements. Kinh people utilize these cultural resources more successful than ethnic people do.

As a rule, when we set three of stakeholders into the context of the market, the interaction ought to be concerned for the first is between clients and sellers. However, this interaction among them is not simply an economic activity, but much more complicated in terms of cultural exchange. Customers or tourists go to a highland market such as Sapa market not only for trading purpose but they also want to satisfy their high expectation of discovering the unique ethnic cultures represented at the market. Meanwhile, both ethnic sellers and non-ethnic sellers are channels that transmit minority cultural resources to tourists. Obviously, the channel transmitting cultural resources to tourists via Hmong and Dao sellers remains as the orthodox one since ethnic people are the owner who has created the minority culture. Consequently, only ethnic people can deliver the most authentic ethnic cultural resources to tourists. On the other hand, non-ethnic sellers can offer tourists authentic ethnic products to some extent; however, they are not ethnic people and they scarcely can clarify about ethnic products like ethnic sellers. Additionally, some products sold by non-ethnic people are even not genuine.

Remarkably, it is impossible for both ethnic and non-ethnic sellers at Sapa market to offer tourists the comprehensive cultural representation of all aspects of the minority culture. In fact, sellers tend to select only the most prominent cultural values of Hmong and Dao culture, which tourists can accept and appreciate. As a result, tourists can experience only limited aspects of Hmong and Dao culture

at the market such as handicraft products, 'love market', herbal remedy and so on.

So far, I would like to illustrate some issues of Sapa market development at present. At first, Sapa market has gradually transformed from a highland traditional market to a modern one. Although this transformation is appropriate to the development tendency of the contemporary period, the degradation of traditional cultural aspect of the market is an alarm, of which the disappearance of 'love market' is a typical example. In the past, 'love market' was a cultural phenomenon that only belonged to local ethnic people who practiced it for themselves, but not a show for outsiders. However, the situation had changed when the participants who were outsiders increased instead of local people and 'love market' now is only a music show, which the district government designed to satisfy tourists' demands. In addition, the project of moving the market away from the town center made new Sapa market and 'love market' separate. As a result, although 'love market' was a part of Sapa market, now it has gradually become a specific cultural phenomenon that is not related to the market.

The second problem is the weaker and weaker voice of ethnic people at the market in many aspects. Ethnic people cannot compete against non-ethnic sellers in business because of the inferiority of business strategy and finance. In terms of number, ethnic sellers are less than non-ethnic sellers. Furthermore, the situation has even become more serious since the number of ethnic sellers, especially impermanent ones, has tended to decrease. If this situation cannot be improved, ethnic people will be absent from Sapa market someday, and the market will definitely become a modern one like most of markets at lowland areas.

In conclusion, among four groups of stakeholders, the government is the manager who stands on the highest position, which allows them to control and make the plan for the cultural resources utilization via the system of policies. They aim to integrate the market as a tourism attraction into the tourism development of Sapa in general. Non-ethnic sellers account for the majority of sellers at Sapa market, who utilize the Hmong and Dao cultural resource for earning living. They are providers who transform ethnic cultural elements into products, and then provide tourists with these products. Thanks to the good background of knowledge and finance, they have come up with many intelligent strategies and gradually predominated over other groups of sellers at the market. On the other hand, ethnic sellers are also providers who create ethnic cultural products by themselves, and then supply tourists. However, ethnic sellers normally remain at the unfavorable position since they have a weak financial background and, in addition, they do not have effective business plans. Among three groups directly involved in the utilization in the context of the market, there is no doubt that ethnic sellers' voice seems to be the weakest although they are cultural owner. Tourists are the consumers who indirectly participate in this utilization; however, they help other groups to orient the tendency of utilization activities since the government, ethnic sellers, non-ethnic sellers all aim to satisfy tourists' interest. According to the analysis on the context of the market and the interaction among key groups of stakeholders (managers – producers / providers – consumers) we can come up with an image of a fully constituted mechanism that encompasses many important components. It is a typical example of the

utilization of cultural resources happened at a specific cultural context.

Notes

- ¹ Source: Tourist Information Center of Sapa, webpage: <http://www.sapatourism.gov.vn/vi/ban-do-sach-huong-dan/> [accessed on 12th Jan, 2018].

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